§ 1.523 [Reserved]

§ 1.524 Persons authorized to represent claimants.

A duly authorized representative will be:

(a) Any person authorized in writing by the claimant to act for him or her,

(b) An attorney who has filed the declaration required by § 14.629(b)(1) of this chapter, or

(c) His or her legally constituted fiduciary, if the claimant is incompetent. Where for proper reasons no legally constituted fiduciary has been or will be appointed, his or her spouse, his or her children, or, if the claimant is unmarried, either of his or her parents shall be recognized as the fiduciary of the claimant.

[33 FR 6536, Apr. 30, 1968]

§ 1.525 Inspection of records by or disclosure of information to recognized representatives of organizations and recognized attorneys.

(a)(1) The accredited representatives of recognized organizations (§ 14.627 of this chapter) holding appropriate power of attorney and recognized attorneys (§ 14.629(b) of this chapter) with the written authorization of the claimant may, subject to the restrictions imposed by paragraph (a)(2) of this section, inspect the claims, insurance and allied folders of any claimant upon the condition that only such information contained therein as may be properly disclosed under §§ 1.500 through 1.526 will be disclosed by him or her to the claimant or, if the claimant is incompetent, to his or her legally constituted fiduciary. Under the same restrictions, it is permissible to release information from and permit inspection of loan guaranty folders in which a request for a waiver of the debt of a veteran or his or her spouse has been received, or where there has been a denial of basic eligibility for loan guaranty benefits. All other information in the files shall be treated as confidential and will be used only in determining the status of the cases inspected or in connection with the presentation to officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs of the claim of the claimant. The heads of field facilities and the directors of the services concerned in Central Office will each designate a responsible officer to whom requests for all files must be made, except that managers of centers with insurance activities will designate two responsible officials, recommended by the division chiefs concerned, one responsible for claims and allied folders and the other for insurance files. The term *claimant* as used in this paragraph includes insureds.

(2) In the case of a living veteran a representative acting under a power of attorney from any person not acting on behalf of the veteran will not be permitted to review the records of the veteran or be furnished any information therefrom to which the person is not entitled, i.e., information not relating to such person alone. Powers of attorney submitted by the other person will be considered ''Limited'' and will be so noted when associated with the veteran's records. The provisions of this subparagraph are also applicable to recognized attorneys and the requisite declarations filed by them.

(3) When power of attorney does not obtain, the accredited representative will explain to the designated officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs the reason for requesting information from the file, and the information will be made available only when in the opinion of the designated officer it is justified; in no circumstances will such representatives be allowed to inspect the file; in such cases a contact report will be made out and attached to the case, outlining the reasons which justify the verbal or written release of the information to the accredited representative.

(4) In any case where there is an unrevoked power of attorney or declaration of representation, no persons or organizations other than the one named in such document shall be afforded information from the file except under the conditions set forth in § 14.629(b)(2) of this chapter. When any claimant has filed notice with the Department of Veterans Affairs that he or she does not want his or her file inspected, such file will not be made available for inspection.